"CUFF," THE ORPHAN BEAR-CUB.

By Geo. A. Martin.

CHARLIE AND "CUFF" HAVE A SPARRING BOUT.

THERE were four of us in the party, and we had built our sylvan camp upon the shore of Tupper's Lake in the Adirondacks. Three of us were enjoying a brief vacation from the turmoil of business in New York City. The fourth, Richard Dryver, familiarly known as "Dick," was a skillful woodsman, learned in all the lore of forest, lake, and mountain. He was born in a log-cabin, and spent his early boyhood amid the woods and waters of the great northern wilderness. He afterward lived with an uncle in one of the thriving villages of Central New York, where he learned the carpenter's trade, and ultimately became a partner in the business. But the love of forest life remained strong within him, and so it was that for several successive seasons we had regarded ourselves as fortunate to have him with us in the Adirondacks; not as hired guide, but as friend and companion.

It was a summer evening. We sat in camp, while

the sun threw a bright gleam across the lake and then sank behind the forest-clad mountain, leaving the western sky all aglow. We were talking over the events of the day, one of which was the discovery of the tracks of a full-grown bear, and several broken twigs among the branches of a wild black cherry tree, which showed that Bruin had been feeding upon the cherries. Dick, however, had pronounced the tracks to be a "cold trail," which meant that several days must have elapsed since the bear's visit. And then, after a pause, in which he seemed to be recalling some incident almost forgotten, he added: "Bears are not as plenty as they were when I caught Cuff."

"Who was Cuff?" we asked.

"Oh, he was a black bear that I captured when he was a baby, and brought up by hand. It happened in this way: I was going through the woods with my dog one afternoon just about this time of year. I heard the dog barking a little way ahead, and suspected by the racket he was making that he had stirred up a bear. The dog was a little fellow, half bull-terrier, active and plucky. It did n't take many minutes to reach the spot where he was barking, and, sure enough, there was an old bear with a cub. The path led along the foot of a rather steep slope. The old bear was up on the top of the bank down which the cub had tumbled and rolled, and the dog attacked him just as I came in sight. The old bear sat up there with her fore paws hanging over the edge of the bank, and her great red mouth wide open, growling and snarling. I wondered why she did n't come down and take care of her cub. But I did n't stop to ask her. I raised my rifle, took aim, and fired, and the ball finished her at once. I climbed up the bank, and then saw why the old bear had stayed there. She had another cub with her. As I started along the edge of the bank toward them the little cub ran. The brush was rather thick, but I managed to keep up with the cub. When I was close upon him the little brute scrambled up a young spruce-tree. The branches were so thick that I could not get through them to follow the cub until I had cut some away with the hatchet I always carry in my belt. Then I shinned up, caught him by the scruff of the neck, and brought him down. The little savage squirmed and squealed, but I held him with his back toward me until I could peel some strips of basswood bark and tie his legs. The other cub was so badly bitten by the dog that I killed him, out of mercy. Then I skinned the old bear and started for home with the hide and the cub."

"How far had you to go?" asked one of the party.

"It was about thirty miles home, but I left the bear-skin with a friend who had a shanty about ten miles from where I killed the old bear and caught the cub. I got home the next day, and put the cub into an empty pig-pen, roofed over so that he could n't climb out. We fed him milk and such food as we ate ourselves. My boy Charlie and the cub soon became great friends. Charlie would get into the pen with him at first, but in a little while the cub was so tame we let him out a good part of the time, only shutting him into his pen at night. He learned everything. But the greatest fun the boy had with the cub was to stand him up in a chair, so as to bring him on a level, and then have a sparring bout. After a little, the boy had to fight in earnest to hold his own, for at intervals the cub would give him a cuff that set him spinning. That 's the way the cub got his name."

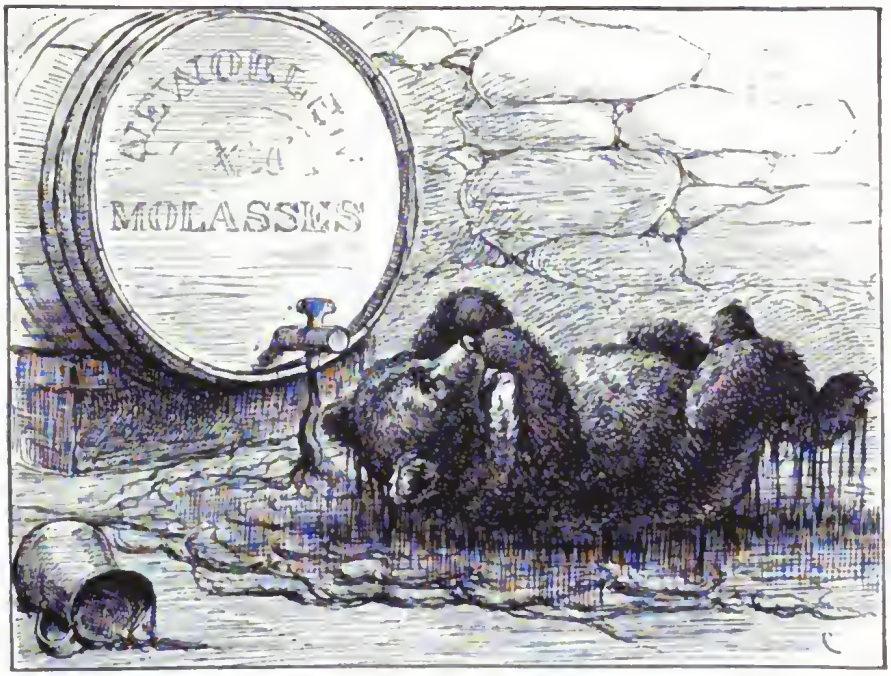
"How long did you keep the cub?" we asked.

"About a year. The summer after I caught him, he had grown to be quite a young bear, and was as tame as a kitten. He and the boy were steady chums, going all over the place together, and indulging in all sorts of tricks. The cub developed an uncommon talent for getting into scrapes. One Sunday, while I was off in the woods, the folks

CUFF COMES TO GRIEF WITH A PAN OF MILK.

all went to meeting. They first shut up Cuff in his pen, but they forgot to fasten it. The door slid up and down, and the cub managed to get his paw and then his nose under it, and raised it so that he got out. The day was warm, and the folks had left one of the kitchen windows open. Cuff climbed

in, and then the mischief began. The cellar-door was unfastened, and he went down to see what he could find. First he climbed up to a swing-shelf



CUFF ENJOYS A TREAT.

where the milk was kept, and managed to tip a pan of it all over himself. Then he went sniffing round till he found a barrel of molasses. You know a bear has a great fondness for sweet things, and he licked around the head of the barrel, and mumbled away at the spigot until it came open, and the molasses flowed in a full stream. Cuff drank in the flowing sweetness until he could hold no more. Then he lay down and rolled in it. Soon after he began to feel unhappy, and he started up the stairs with molasses dripping from his shaggy hide at every step. It was n't long before the folks came home from meeting. The first thing they noticed was the open cellar-door, and the track of molasses leading from it through the hall to the girls' room. The girls hurried to their room, and there on the clean white bedspread was Cuff, lying on his back, with a big swarm of flies buzzing around him. Maria — one of my daughters — ran out and picked up a broom and vigorously belabored poor Cuff over his head and ears. He tumbled from the bed and ran out of the house. They got him into his pen, shut and fastened the door, and kept him there till I came home."

"What did you do with him?"

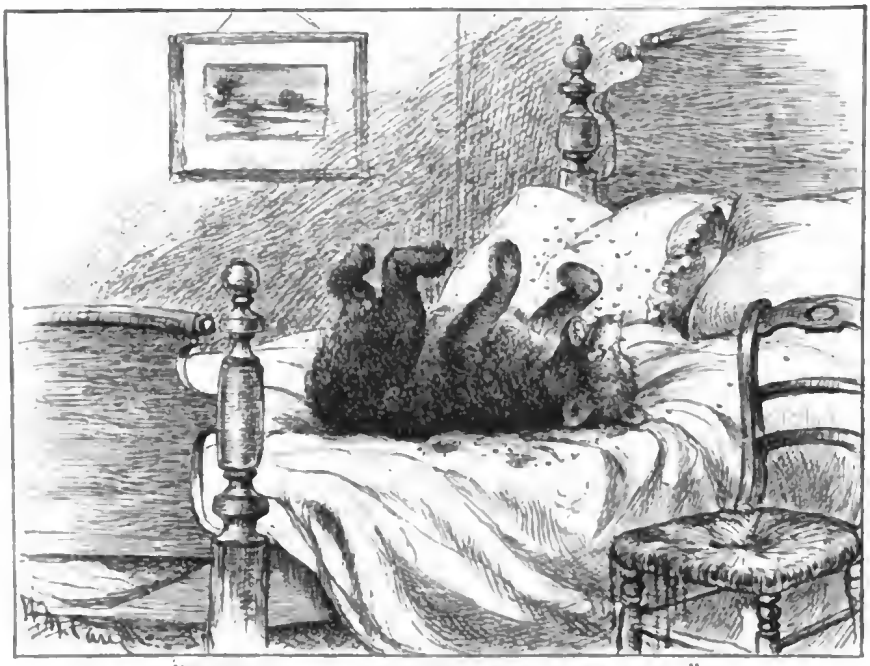
"Oh, Mother and the girls were so indignant over the damage he had done that they wanted me to shoot him or sell him. But Charlie begged so hard, that I bought a collar and chain and fastened Cuff to a stake in the orchard. We built him a comfortable little house to sleep in, and he was fed regularly; but he seemed lonesome and unhappy during the hours when Charlie was at school. Just as soon as school was out, Charlie would make straight for the orchard, hoping to have a great frolic with Cuff. But one afternoon, when he went there — Cuff was gone! The ring of the chain had worn his leather collar so thin that he had broken it by pulling. Charlie followed the trail across a meadow and into a piece of woods beyond; there he lost it. The next morning I went there, but the cub had probably traveled all night, and I gave up the search."

"Was that the last of him?"

"Not quite. For the next year I was up in the

"CUFF STARTED UP THE STAIRS WITH MOLASSES DRIPPING AT EVERY STEP."

old place for a few weeks. Early one morning as I awoke, there stood a young bear a little way from the open side of my little bough house. I jumped up mighty quick, but, just as I reached for my gun, the bear sat straight up and held out his paws just as Cuff used to when he was sparring with Charlie. I called out 'Cuff!' and he came straight up to me, acting as if glad to see his old master again. I patted his head and talked to him. Then he followed me down to the lake and sat watching me while I fished. I gave him part of the fish and he went away.



"THERE ON THE CLEAN WHITE BEDSPREAD WAS CUFF."

I stayed there several days after that, and he came every morning for his breakfast and a little frolic. I would have tried to get him home with me, only the wife and girls had never forgiven him. So the last morning, I gave him a good breakfast, and while he was eating it, leaving him there, I packed up my traps and started, and never heard or saw anything more of the little fellow."